

5 May 1982

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

FROM: Herbert E. Meyer

SUBJECT: Third World Business Communities  
as Insurgency Targets

1. We have long understood why it is a top priority of Third World insurgency movements to cripple a target country's business community: such a community is always fragile, and when its leaders give up or go down in defeat the country's economy is shattered and its middle class--the social backbone--is broken.

a. I propose that we prepare an assessment that will outline precisely how Third World business communities are attacked by insurgent movements. Among the questions our assessment would answer are these:

(1) What tactics are used to disrupt commerce--e.g., blowing up bridges and roads to halt deliveries?

(2) What tactics are used to intimidate business leaders--e.g., kidnapping and murder?

(3) What financial problems directly attributable to insurgent movements cause the collapse of companies whose leaders strive to keep going--e.g., withdrawal of credit from foreign suppliers who are scared off by press reporting?

b. Our assessment should also explore various forms of assistance the US and its allies could provide--either directly or through the local government--that would be specifically designed to help locally-owned businesses in Third World countries threatened by insurgencies.

2. The attached piece, from today's Wall Street Journal, illustrates the kind of thing I have in mind; I urge you to read it.

Herbert E. Meyer

Attachment

SECRET